

MINUTES DRAFT
Of the December 4th 2008
Woods Bay/Bigfork 440 Working Group
Held at 8:30am Saddlehorn Office, Bigfork

Mr. Darrow called the meeting to order with the following members present:
George Darrow, Jim Frizzell, Clarice Ryan, Kevin Gownley, Kitty Rich, Tracy Reiling, Paul Rana, Anne Moren (DNRC), Greg Poncin (DNRC), Steve Brady (USFS),

Guests: Pat Smith – Chair of Woods Bay Sewer Committee, Bill Meyers – Woods Bay

George called the meeting to Order
Minutes of the November 12th meeting were reviewed and approved

As to review the mandate the committee is operating under: Comments written from the public meetings, most favored keeping as is and removing it from the Land Bank System. Logging was needed to prevent fires and preventing infestation to promote a healthy and safe environment. George handed out maps of the area and explained the areas boarding the 440 and designations of areas. The USFS land bordering is under Natural Area designation and Steve then explained the differences of 3 and 3A management. Management area 3, though not in the “suitable” timber base does allow for timber harvest from existing roads for such purposes as salvage and fuel reduction. Management area 3A is a designation reserved for the Research Natural Area, in in these areas, timber harvest of any type is not allowed without an amendment to the Forest Plan.

The subject of fire control as a short term goal was discussed. Greg did provide the letter to the homeowners with a request for legal access. Kevin will present the letter and let us know the outcome. I do not have a copy of the letter to provide for the minutes. Kevin asked if this was to be approved by the homeowners would this solve the problem. Greg said it would go a long way toward satisfying our Goals (meaning it is the first step that would enable us to meet some of our mutually agreed to goals).

How do we provide revenue to the Beneficiary?

Kevin spoke with the Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation and they are showing interest. They would purchase the land but only with a take out partner in place. This would be a buyer to take over the land as the Elk Foundation is not in the business of land management.

Another possibility for revenue is someone leasing the land directly from the DNRC

Steve followed up with Linda Smith who spoke at the last meeting. The Environmental Analysis cost given then was low, after looking into it more it would be in the \$100,000 to \$150,000 range. Both of the parcels discussed for trading are designated as Management Area 2, so do not appear to be good candidates. Both of the areas have Grizzly, Lynx and Bull trout issues. By trading and becoming State lands they would lose some of the protections they now have. It is also looking like the 440 would out value the other parcels and the difference would then need to be made up with dollars.

Greg thought that section #35 was at an elevation not suitable for timber harvest.

Another detriment to the trade is that the USFS staff will be tied up with the Plum Creek Legacy project in the Swan. It is becoming apparent that the procedures of the DNRC and USFS will be very difficult to mesh together, although Steve believes both units administratively make sense for the USFS. The island unit in the Blacktail area, he believes, is worth exploring.

Bill Meyer announced that he is in favor of the trade as a good option but sees the 440 always appraising higher because of the fact that it will be appraised by the DNRC as if having access. Jim asked if there would be anyway to simplify this.....Steve and Greg...NO.

Another option in the list of tools is buying just the rights and this could be something that is done by and individual, group or the community.

As a case study we will look at the Owen-Sauerwine, Audubon lease at the next meeting and see if this should be a direction to consider.

Clarice made a motion that the DNRC get a preliminary valuation update dollar range, as done in 1999, so we have a number to work with. This was seconded by Jim with hopes to have this by our next meeting on January 14th, 10am at Saddlehorn.

Meeting was adjourned.